

Sideris, Vasilios and Cleo Salicos

Bedeni was one of the "Lost Cities of Arcadia" and so called because the name was of Turkish origin and all Turkish names were to be changed to Greek names under 1931 and 1933 laws passed in Greece. Hence, the Turkish named villages were said to have been lost. Vasilios Sideris was born in Bedeni and emigrated in 1922 before the village was re-named Scopi. The village is in the heart of the central Peloponnese near Tripolis, a town twice captured by Kolokotronis during the Greek War of Independence. Born during the first decade of the twentieth century, "Bill" Sideris left Greece at age 16 with his good friend, Gregory Svolopoulos, at a tumultuous time when Turkish atrocities against Greeks in Smyrna forced hundreds of thousands of Greeks to flee Asia Minor, many of them to Greece, and some to Omaha.

Bill's brothers, Gus and Jake, were already living in Council Bluffs, Iowa where Bill and his friend also settled. Bill's first job was selling hot dogs. Council Bluffs, at the time, had a large contingent of Greeks living there. Probably from savings from work, Bill moved across the Missouri River and opened the Oaks Bar, a business he operated until he was drafted during WWII. He served under the command of Gen George Patton in England before returning to Omaha, where through mutual friends he met and married Cleo Salicos of Fort Worth, Texas. Two children were born of the marriage, Helen and George. Helen married Lou Sinos whose family was firmly established at St. John's and whose own children, Dino, Christopher and Stephanie were baptized at St. John's. The eldest, Dino Sinos, was ordained a Greek Orthodox priest in Denver, Colorado in November 2007 after his marriage to Rachel Dredla of Omaha. George, the son of Bill and Cleo, now lives in the Fort Worth, Texas area near his own daughter, Angela, and her children, Alan Marx and Olivia Marx.

Ever proud of his Greek heritage and the Arcadian hills of his youth, Bill supported his family with earnings from his long time business, which he named Tripoli Bar, at the corner of 14th and Douglas Streets in Omaha. Many years later, when the City of Omaha determined to build a downtown library, the entire Douglas-Farnam block from 14th to 15th Street was taken by eminent domain and Bill retired soon after his property was taken.

Since Bill's demise, Cleo has resided with Helen and Lou Sinos from where her grandmotherly influence on, and her love for, her four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren have been her pleasure and their benefit. Bill and Cleo and their children and grandchildren alike have been steady, unwavering, staunch and continuous supporters of St. John's and its liturgical life, by service as directors, officers and workers for a period extending over six decades.